

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA**  
**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS POLICY**

**Subject**

Use and Distribution of County-Owned Sandbags and Other Resources

**Policy  
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K-11

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**Purpose**

To establish policies and procedures for the use and distribution of County-owned sandbags before and during emergency operations.

**Background**

During the past winter seasons, citizens in the low-lying areas of the County, because of high demand, were unable to purchase sandbags for flood protection. Subsequently various groups of citizens have requested that the County furnish them with sandbags prior to the start of the storm season so that they can be ready to protect their homes. Giving out sandbags to citizens to protect private property would be a gift of public funds and is therefore prohibited by the California Constitution except in cases where a public interest in such sandbag distribution can be identified. It is primarily the responsibility of owners of homes and businesses to protect their homes and businesses from flood damage. The County Office of Emergency Services shall assist citizens in preparing for the flood season by making available information on sources of equipment and supplies by a continuing program of education in the techniques of flood damage prevention.

**Policy**

It is the policy of the Board of Supervisors that:

1. Primary responsibility for the prevention of flood damage to private property rests with the individual property owner.
2. Information on the techniques of flood damage prevention shall be made available by the County Office of Emergency Services.
3. The County Office of Emergency Services shall maintain an up-to-date listing of commercial sources for sand and sandbags available to the public upon request.
4. County forces and resources before and during emergency operations due to flooding shall be restricted to:
  - a. protection of County maintained roads, bridges, culverts, buildings and other County maintained facilities,
  - b. prevention or alleviation of widespread inundation areas, including the distribution of sandbags to private property owners in areas where there exists substantial public

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interest because of the potential for widespread flooding and significant harm to the public health, safety and welfare if preventative action is not taken.

c. emergency repairs of County maintained drainage facilities to prevent damages for which the County could be held liable.

**Sunset Date**

This policy will be reviewed for continuance by 12-31-11.

**Board Action**

12-10-80 (7c)

1-13-81 (71)

12-4-84 (29)

12-15-87 (44)

11-29-94 (40)

09-27-05 (1)

**CAO Reference**

1) Office of Emergency Services